

Sutton Environment Group

Notes from meeting 14th January 2014

Renewable Energy

- Rick looked into the possibility of Hydro electric power for the village. It does not seem favourable due to a lack of drop in river level within the parish.
- Ground heat source energy for the village also probably only realistic for new builds.

Action: Rick and Keith to continue investigating

Grants and funding

- The possibility of applying for a grant from Sharing your Heritage (Heritage Lottery Fund) had been investigated. Hannah McSherry (Herefordshire Council) believed the history and natural environment projects would be eligible, particularly with the local school involved (Story telling, art works, nature walks, guided walks). However an HLF application and project would be a large amount of work with a detailed plan, well devised objectives and clear outputs.
- Smaller pockets of money would perhaps be more useful to provide speakers, guides and advice, on an as needed basis. Herefordshire Community Foundation (www.herefordshirefoundation.org) was suggested as it has small pots of money for delivery of services to the community. Cargills no longer provide grants for projects of this nature.
- WREN funding for areas near land fill sites

Action: Judy to check WREN funding

Liz to investigate the smaller pots of money and contact Dave Barclay of Herefordshire Community Foundation

External advice

- David MacLeod of Luston Parish audit group had provided some helpful discussions on the phone, and produced an extremely useful account of their experiences whilst undertaking historic and natural environment audits of their parish. See Appendix 1.

Village map

- Electronic version of map had been circulated

Historic Environment survey

- Judy received a quote from Herefordshire Archaeology for undertaking an Historic Environment Parish Audit, which would be around £3500. See Appendix 2. An HLF grant or other large size fund would be needed to pay for this. No decision will be taken on how to proceed until other funding sources and options have been looked at.
- Historic information from the Historic Environment Record (HER) and Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (RCHM) had been copied.
- The County Archives are no longer open to access maps and records of the parish, and will not be available for a year. Alternative sources for tithe maps, history etc. need to be found
- Local building surveys undertaken on properties would be useful to gather together.

Action: Judy to continue to source published information and maps, and to put a call out for information in Sutton News and include as part of any events.

Natural Environment survey

- Les had sourced and compiled a list of Bird Records for the Parish from 1998 to 2013. He also produced a sketch map with changing land-use from 1937 to 1966-71 surveys, including orchards, arable and hedgerows, which can be worked up into a larger map. He tried to contact the Nature Trust but had been unsuccessful in getting a response.
- Biological Records are not easy to obtain, and Luston recommended not to use them as they cost and have limited value and duration.
- Farm and land surveys for birds, invertebrates and bats will have been carried out on a number of properties in Sutton. This information would be useful to gather together.

Action: Les to continue gathering information and Judy to provide R Roseff Hedgerow survey details. Judy to put a call out for information in Sutton News and include as part of any events. Les to hold all information gathered

Litter Picking

Action: Les is organising a Spring pick

Neighbourhood Watch

Action: Ann to work out next steps

Events

- A series of events to be organised for general interest and information gathering
- First event to be on Sutton Walls and the Iron Age, a Saturday in March.
- Cecelia Arlett to be asked if she could do something on enclosure and field strips in the parish.
- Possible other events to investigate: Rebecca Roseff – Hedgerows; Archive Service - maps; Canal Trust
- Guided walks and guided surveys will need funding to provide specialist leaders
- School events and family activities

Action: Judy to organise Iron Age event in March, and talk to Rebecca Ann to ask Cecelia

Next steering group meetings

- Wednesdays have been suggested, either the 1st or the 4th in the month.
- The next one to be arranged, possibly March 5th

APPENDIX 1

-----DRAFT ONLY-----

Luston Group Parish Council - Lessons learned from our early efforts to audit features of the natural and built environment.

During the development of our Parish Plan (2005) parishioners showed a particular enthusiasm for preserving the 'Character and Environment' of the parish. This led to calls for a survey to be carried out to identify and record valued features of the built and natural environment. Having collected lots of data from local interest groups and, whenever possible, from parishioners directly we decided to take up an idea in the parish plan and display the information gathered on a parish map at a central spot in the village of Luston. This, we felt, was just the start of a more detailed survey(s) to follow - but other things got in the way!

However, motivated by the conviction that at some point the looming prospect of the Neighbourhood Plan would turn the desire for a detailed survey into an urgent necessity, a couple of councillors decided in early 2013 that it was time to begin in earnest. A group of volunteers formed the AUDIT Group, devised a plan and completed valuable work but the group were in doubt about how best to serve the Neighbourhood Plan and daunted by the apparent scale of the task.

Below is a brief summary of what lessons we feel can be learned from this for the purpose of guiding our own actions from this point and, if desired, helping others with a similar dilemma.

Preparation

In our case the a well networked PP Steering Group and 'Planning for Real' events at the parish planning stage represented an easy way of gathering initial data about what the community valued. This we believe still provides a good basis for guiding more detailed surveys whilst also providing useful information on what parishioners wish to protect and what, in terms of development planning, may or may not be supported by the community.

Message: Use questionnaires and public events at any/all stages to seek information about what the community truly values about its natural and built environment.

Specialism

The AUDIT group was split into 3 sections, (1) buildings, (2) land use and (3) natural history, with the original intention to compile details in each of these matters across the parish. This aided best use of volunteer interest or expertise in specialist disciplines, allowed enthusiasm to drive action and enabled the range of resources to be spread or focussed on a particular area at will.

Message: Assess the interests and skills available in the survey team and form groups focussed on the useful specialisms where possible. This way, the task becomes more manageable and even the non-specialists are provided with a choice of how they spend their time or express their enthusiasm.

Direction and Detail?

Although our initial scheme divided the parish into 1km squares (and even one quarter of this for accurate eight figure grid referencing) it was soon evident that this was simply too big and time consuming a task and was likely to result in an enormous amount of almost undecipherable data.

It would take years to gather the information, and really not help in the NP. Enthusiasm was rapidly lost, and only the buildings audit has made significant progress.

Message: Resist the temptation to try to gather information about everything (except when asking what the community likes or wants). Unless you have limitless resource (which you almost certainly do not) effort must be focussed as you approach the detailed stages specifically on what will aid the NP project.

Focus on NP

Following the decision by the PC to do an NP, our Steering Group recommended the AUDIT group work specifically to gather information directly useful to a NP but the question remained, "What will be relevant?" Consultation with our HC mentor

revealed the answer “Whatever the SG considers relevant is relevant!” which, at first, we found surprising. Of course, actually, it is not!

The level of detail required will vary dependent upon the nature and the scale of the particular NP and will be likely to vary across the area of the parish (e.g. those areas to be developed vs those to remain untouched).

The depth and detail of the NP likely to be produced will, to a large degree, be the determining factor in our view. Obviously, listed buildings are important, but also any non-listed but worthy of preservation (or highly valued) should be recorded. Whether one details the type of house, the roof materials, the structure of the windows etc. is for the SG to decide. Similarly, notable trees, with or without a TPO, established orchards, pre-Enclosure Act hedges, or any other natural feature felt to be worth preserving should be noted. Some areas will then need to be assessed as suitable or not to be released for development? If so does it flood?? What about road access?

Areas that are possible targets for development will need greater concentration and are likely therefore to require more time and resource, e.g. common land, brownfield sites, potential infill, fields near existing housing etc. When and where data suggests suitability for use as a development site yet more detail will be required (eg. considering our team’s work, detail at the 1km squares level would initially be sufficient with the 1/4 km for in-depth recording of sites earmarked for potential building).

Message: Survey early for opinions and general features but detailed surveys of land and buildings require forethought and some early speculation about the scale and type of NP the parish is likely to be developing and, if appropriate, what areas need to be considered for development. In our view only then can work proceed at a more detailed level with the clear recognition by the project team that potential development areas will require much greater time and resource?

Finally: A cautionary note about buying existing records

Our Natural History subgroup applied to Hereford biological records office for data of our parish which cost £60. The data received was mostly bird records from a National trust site, and the garden and wildflower meadow of the applicant! Not a lot of use, and the data had to be destroyed after 12 months in any case.

Message: ‘Caveat Emptor ‘and don’t waste your time and money as we did!

APPENDIX 2

Parish Audit for the parish of Sutton St. Nicholas

Project proposal

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Revised 9th January 2014

Background

Our current understanding of the historic landscape and the features that it contains is based on accumulated knowledge over many decades. This accumulated knowledge has come from a variety of sources including past archaeological surveys, casual observations by individuals and detailed work on specific sites. This variety means that the coverage of individual parishes can be extremely patchy and even where a site is known there may be limited knowledge on its current state. Therefore, in relation to parish planning or strategic planning at the Wye Valley AONB level and greater, it is difficult to provide clear datasets that inform the priorities for the management or can be provided to communities to ascribe their own priorities and values to this heritage.

The project in this proposal aims to pilot work that will provide a more systematic coverage of the resource that can then inform future priorities at the local parish level and county level. Through the use of LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) in combination with other techniques the project will be able to quantify the number and extent of individual monument types, it will be able to give an indication of the condition of the resource and create a dataset and summary that is useable at the parish level.

Project aim and objectives

The project aim is to systematically improve our record of heritage assets within the parish and will engage the local community with that improved record.

The project objectives are:

1. To review the existing records for the parish
2. To systematically improve the record of heritage assets through the use of new mapping techniques such as LiDAR in combination with historical mapping, aerial photography, field observation and existing knowledge (local knowledge, staff knowledge and existing record).
3. To provide a report summarising the range, condition and significance of heritage assets of that parish.
4. To provide one outreach event (guided walk, presentation or community planning).

Method

1. Review existing record to provide a base record to assess against additional information.
2. Obtain LiDAR coverage for the entire parish, process using MapInfo GIS and map features.
3. Identify and map features from historical mapping (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th edition historic Ordnance Survey mapping) and aerial photographs. Identify indicators of historic features from tithe mapping (field name indicators such as brickclap meadow or limekiln field).
4. Establish a liaison group for the parish and review the initial record with a small consultation group. The consultation group will assist with the identification of features
5. Carry out fieldwork in partnership with the local community to confirm interpretations and mapping made at desktop stage. Fieldwork will also explore for features that are indicated by fieldname evidence on historic mapping.
6. Refine records for features after fieldwork and desktop mapping stages and integrate information into the Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record.
7. Produce a report summarising the range, extent and condition of the heritage assets in the area. The report will be designed to assist the development of local parish plans.

8. Organise and deliver an outreach event. The type of event will be determined in consultation with the local liaison group to provide an appropriate level of public engagement. Options for the outreach event include a guided walk, a presentation or a community planning event.

Timetable

The project will be delivered in 2014 between March and September. The project will have a number of milestones to enable progress of the project to be monitored.

Outputs

A summary report for the parish

An enhanced record for the parish in the Sites and Monuments Record

An outreach event agreed with the community

Project Team

Tim Hoverd, (Archaeological Projects Manager) will act as Project Manager and have overall responsibility for the project within Herefordshire Council.

Peter Dorling (Senior Archaeologist (landscape)) will act as Project Officer for the project with responsibility for day-to-day management of the project and will be responsible for project delivery. This will include field checking, community outreach, desktop mapping and record enhancement. Peter will also produce the final report.

Lucie Dingwall, (Sites and Monuments Record Officer) will act as Project Support for the integration of the improved records into the Sites and Monuments Record.

Dear Judy,

Please find attached a quick proposal for a Parish Audit of Sutton St. Nicholas. As you will see I have left it fairly open in as much as the type of event which could be used to disseminate the findings.

I would put a ballpark figure of somewhere around the 3.5k mark which would include the purchasing of LiDar tiles etc.

Kindest Regards
Tim

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